

of the outlay and profits of the Durham Gas Company shows that their gains for 1848 were at the rate of 27½ per cent.—The Whittle Dean water, with which Newcastle-on-Tyne is now supplied, in place of from the filthy river itself, would appear to have prevented a repetition of the dreadful mortality by cholera in 1832, the epidemic of 1849 having been "comparatively harmless." A few such facts, together with those presented in the metropolis itself, will surely decide the question of the necessity for a speedy and abundant supply of pure water, both here and elsewhere.—A subscription for the erection of a new church at Ambleside was lately opened, and 2,000*l.* at once obtained.—John Knox's house at Edinburgh is under repair, although the question of its demolition is still an open one.—A bridge of 230 feet in length has been thrown across the Doveron, at Milltown, of Rothiemay, N.B.

OPENING OF THE NEW METROPOLITAN COMMISSION OF SEWERS.

The members of the new commission met on Wednesday, at the Court-house, Greek-street, pursuant to clause 4 of the Sewers' Act. There were present—Lord Ebrington, M.P., Sir H. de la Beche, Lieut.-Colonel Alderson, Sir John Burgoyne, Capt. Vetch, Capt. Dawson, Capt. Harness, Mr. S. M. Peto, Mr. P. Hardwick, Mr. Thomas Hawes, Mr. Edward Lawes, and Mr. J. M. Rendell. The secretary (Mr. Woolrych) read the commission issued by the Lord Chancellor, containing the appointment of the above-named gentlemen, and which bore date the 10th of October.

Some other formal proceedings being gone through, Viscount Ebrington was voted to the chair, and addressed the court. In the course of his observations his lordship said, that for reasons that need not be mentioned, and which were well known to the public, it had been deemed expedient to supersede the late commission, and to issue a new one. He would not dwell upon the responsibility of the trust that had been conferred upon them. The work was of the deepest interest to the health and lives of all comprised within the area of their jurisdiction,—an area comprising the greatest, the wealthiest, and the most populous city in the world. They had many difficulties to encounter,—not only as to the views of the commissioners, but difficulties arising out of the actual state of affairs in their own office. He believed that neither could their duties be properly and efficiently performed, nor could their difficulties be surmounted, unless a better feeling gained ground, not only amongst the commissioners, but amongst their officers, for "a house divided against itself could not stand." He hoped, however they might differ in opinion, they would discuss all without wrangling, and after opinion, that it would not end in acrimony or ill-will. Under God's blessing, therefore, he trusted they would be enabled to confer additional comfort and length of days to the citizens and to their families, and that the public would not judge of them by their professions or their intentions, but by their acts. Without saying more, he thought they might at once proceed to the business of the court.

Sir John Burgoyne moved the re-appointment of Mr. Woolrych as secretary to the commission, and also the re-appointment of the accountants and clerks in the secretary's department. Agreed to.

A letter was received from Mr. Austin, consulting engineer, stating that, in consequence of certain resolutions come to by three of the Commission of the Board of Health at Gwydyr House, he had thought it his duty to tender his resignation of his office. At the same time, he should at all times be most happy to render any advice or assistance in his power, and should be ready to further develop his views in his plan of drainage, if such should be required, either as a whole or part of any system that might be ultimately agreed upon. This letter was accompanied by one from Lord Carlisle, who dwelt on the somewhat anomalous position of the members of the Board of Health, being also Commissioners of Sewers, and vindicated especially the conduct of one of them—Mr. Chadwick—which had been the subject of much unmerited attack.

The letter was received, and ordered to be entered upon the minutes, and upon the motion of Captain Dawson, a vote of thanks was passed to Mr. Austin, for the offer he had made of assistance to the commissioners.

Capt. Dawson said he looked upon this as a fitting and proper opportunity for remodelling the whole of the engineers and surveyors' department. His lordship in the chair, in his address, had alluded to the officers of the court, and the division among them had been productive of great inconvenience. Without a proper understanding, however proper the officers, it was impossible that works could be

efficiently performed. With this view, and as a step towards remodelling the whole of the engineering department, he moved that the surveyors and officers be re-appointed for three months only.

Mr. Hardwick seconded the motion, and considered it of the highest importance to the public that the whole engineering establishment should be re-modelled.—Agreed to.

Sir H. de la Beche said it was of the utmost importance, and it was absolutely necessary that they should have well-considered official arrangements, for without them the organization of their department could not be efficient. Yet, notwithstanding these arrangements, however good the individual persons might be, there was nothing so essential to the service that might be derived from them as that they should be well placed, and then good results would be sure to follow. It was highly desirable that they should not lose the benefit of the investigations that were in progress, and which were stopped by the ending of the commission. It was also desirable that they should ascertain what had been done before they could carry on their works, and above all it was necessary that they should have before them the ordnance map and the results of the subterranean survey. The ordnance map was now available for portions of their districts, and the subterranean survey had made great progress, giving them a proper insight into what existed below the surface of the metropolis. When these documents were presented, the court would see what had been done, and he hoped that they would not regret the step that had been taken by their predecessors. To see this, and perhaps to chalk out their progress for the future, he thought it would be desirable that a committee of the whole body should be appointed to ascertain the official arrangements of the commission, the state of the various works undertaken by the previous commissioners and not completed, and to report the same to the court.—Seconded and agreed to.

Sir H. de la Beche then read the resolutions that had been passed upon the question of the various plans sent in for the proposed drainage of London, and said that it would be courteous on the part of the commissioners to state that they should receive proper consideration. It was, however, necessary, before doing so, that they should have the City Commissioners present, as the plans proposed had reference to the City as well as the parts of their own jurisdiction. He therefore moved that a communication should be made to the Lord Mayor, stating that a new commission had been granted, and the old one had been superseded, and to request that four persons, in addition to his lordship, might be appointed as commissioners to that court.—Agreed to.

Upon the recent accident in Kenilworth-street, Pimlico, being reported to the court.

Mr. Lovick, the assistant-surveyor, presented a voluminous statement, detailing the nature of the works that had been ordered in that district, and giving it as his opinion that the fatal results there had arisen from a quantity of offensive lime from gas-works being shot down for the purpose of filling up open spaces in the road, and that the poisonous qualities of the gas absorbed by the lime had, by a fall of rain, percolated the top of the sewer (over which it was placed), and mixing with the refuse within the sewer, had liberated certain pernicious gases, and thereby led to the deadly effects that had followed.

The report was received, and on the motion of the chairman, it was agreed that the circumstances should be investigated by the committee, in accordance with the suggestion of Mr. Phillips and Mr. Gotto, chief and assistant surveyors; and that every facility be afforded to the officers in attending inquiries whenever they may be required.—Adjourned.

Miscellaneous.

PROPOSITION FOR A PROFESSIONAL CLUB HOUSE.—I cannot help thinking it is much to be regretted that an institution of club-house cannot be formed by the members of the different professions, viz., architects, painters, sculptors, engineers, engravers, and surveyors, and it might have chambers attached to it which would be both convenient and profitable, and tend to support the expenses of the establishment. It is true you have the Institute of Architects and Engineers, but what I think is required is a general place of meeting, where members could go in to read the papers, write letters, have letters directed to them, or a library, &c., to refer to; there might also be a lecture-room, museum, &c. It should be central, and such a spot as the vacant space in Leicester-square would be convenient to the generality of persons. A. S.

* * This proposition was made in our pages some time ago, but it did not then elicit sufficient response to induce any further steps. We should be glad to see it carried out.

FREEMASONS OF THE CHURCH.—At a meeting of this society, held on Tuesday evening (Oct. 9), Mr. R. Williams in the chair, Mr. J. W. Archer exhibited a collection of original water-colour drawings of architectural remains in the county of Kent. Many of them represented domestic specimens in and about Rochester, and one a newly-discovered crypt, which he thought must have formed part of the ancient church of St. Mary in that city, now destroyed. Mr. A. also exhibited some rubbings of incised slabs in the church of St. John, Chester, and the possibly unique specimen of a monumental brass having one portion (a curious incident in the life of one of the Lords Arundel), executed at a much later period than the date of the inscription. Mr. W. Harry Rogers then read a paper on the "Decorative Resources of the Modern Architect," dividing them principally into five classes, viz., the human figure; drapery, under its various forms; animals, only when these are by common compliance acknowledged as the representatives of certain appropriate ideas; flowers; and, lastly, conventional ornaments, mainly derived from natural types.

SEWERAGE OF LINCOLN.—The following, says the local *Times*, is Mr. Giles's estimate of the cost of a complete sewerage for Lincoln, as indicated by the plans, &c., which will shortly be laid before the public:—Construction of the sewers, 20,576*l.*; flushing apparatus, 1,200*l.*; engine-well, steam-engines, pumps, &c., 1,900*l.*; two acres of land, 400*l.*; raising land and roads, 150*l.*; draining-shed, 500*l.*; office, 150*l.*; precipitating tanks and apparatus, 1,650*l.*; contingencies, 2,671*l.*; total, 29,346*l.* The proposed extent of sewers is nearly 17 miles. The gross rental of the city being estimated at 40,000*l.* to 50,000*l.* per annum, it is calculated that a rate of sixpence in the pound a-year would cover the cost. Under the Health of Towns Act the money could be borrowed, and the repayment spread over thirty years. Part of the proposal is to convert the collected refuse into inodorous cake manure, under Mr. Higgin's system. The liquid, deprived of smell, would run into the Witham. Mr. Giles has offered to undertake the works at the sum stated.

BRISTOL ATHENÆUM.—Lectures at this institution (which promises to be valuable for the young men of Bristol) were commenced on Thursday in last week, by the Rev. N. Haycroft, M.A., on the Formation of Character, which was delivered in the exhibition-room of the Fine Arts Academy. The programme promises a good series, and it is to be hoped, as Mr. Haycroft said, that many will take advantage of opportunities of increasing knowledge which our forefathers never had. The room, it may be observed, is not altogether well adapted for the purpose; it is hung with baize, which muffles the voice to an uncomfortable extent.

ST. MARY ABBOT'S, KENSINGTON.—A petition is about to be presented to the House of Commons by the ratepayers of this parish, praying the House to devise such ample and equitable measures as shall lead to a sufficient supply of good water.

VENTILATION OF SEWERS.—The frightful accident in the sewer at Pimlico has induced me to offer a plan which I have for years considered as the most effectual for ventilating the sewers. They have been usually ventilated through the gullies, and more recently, they have been trapped. Small gratings have been fixed in the centre of the carriage-way, by which horses are often frightened, as I know to my cost. I would propose that when any house or party wall is rebuilt, or when a street is built, a 6-inch air flue, formed of glazed pipe, joints well cemented, be carried up adjoining the kitchen flue, to the chimney top, and communicated along the area party-wall, with the crown of sewer in road, then we should not be annoyed in the streets as we now are with bad smells. One house in, say, twenty would be enough in the new streets. I am aware that this is only a modification of the ventilating shafts that have been proposed: the powers for requiring the owners of houses to do this might be provided in the proposed new Building's Act. I find the rain water pipes are sometimes used for this purpose, but the chimney shaft would be much better.

E. O. SYMONS.